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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

LAMBETH CHAPEL,

AT THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

W I L L I A M

LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S,

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1794.

BY

CHARLES PETER LAYARD, D.D. F.R.S. F.A.S. *k*

PREBENDARY OF WORCESTER, AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

PUBLISHED BY COMMAND OF
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP.

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PRINTED FOR J. WALTER, CHARING-CROSS; AND F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
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S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

DAMSBETH CHAPEL

CONFIRMATION

HONORABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

W I L L I A M

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM



CHARLES PETER LAYARD, D.D. F.R.S.E.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER, AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HER MAJESTY

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I PETER, CHAP. V. V. 4.

**WHEN THE CHIEF SHEPHERD SHALL APPEAR, YE SHALL
RECEIVE A CROWN OF GLORY, WHICH FADETH NOT
AWAY.**

WHEN we look back upon the early ages of Christianity, and consider the variety of heresies which agitated and divided the Church, we are astonished at the rapid growth and succession of errors, and at the numbers who arose, "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." When we examine the tenets, by which particular sects distinguished themselves, and the unwarrantable methods they sometimes adopted, to reconcile these peculiarities with their profession of being the only sincere teachers of the true faith, the presumption of the human mind, in attempting to vindicate the most extravagant opinions, appears before us

in a shape of gigantic deformity ; but when we discover the motives to which many a formidable sect was indebted for its origin, that the basest passions of a depraved heart, and the foulest vices which disgraced even Heathenism, actuated the preachers of many strange doctrines, we are disgusted at the degradation to which human nature was sunk, and on the whole, are willing to hope, that the Church of Christ had, even in its early conflicts with its internal foes, frustrated every attempt to cherish those seeds of division, which the enemy of mankind had sown. To specify to this audience instances, in support of the assertions now made, would be a needless and presumptuous intrusion on their patience. They well understand the causes why these vexations were permitted. " There must be also," saith St. Paul to the Corinthians, " heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Of those, which were approved, consisted that true church, which, to use the words of the same apostle, " God hath caused to triumph in Christ."

“ Christ, and to this day maketh manifest the favour
 “ of his knowledge in every place.”

But, though the church continued firm in its superiority to all its enemies, having vanquished many, whose attacks are on record, and many also, whose very names and tenets are deservedly forgotten, it is evident that much damage must have been individually sustained, both among the flocks and by their shepherds, many having been misled, to their own destruction, and many having been perverted, to the scandal, not only of their profession, but also of the station, to which they had been called, that they might “ watch over the flock of Christ committed to their charge.” In many instances, it must be confessed, that their trials were severe, and the contests, in which they were sometimes subdued, of extreme difficulty; but of this our Lord himself had warned them, foretelling “ false Christs and false prophets,” who should deceive, “ if it were possible, the very elect;” subjoining this sentence, to impress more strongly his

prediction on the minds of his disciples, "Behold, I
 " have told you before."——

But it was not with these enemies only that the church of Christ was obliged to contend. The prejudices of the Jew, the philosophy, and even the superstition of the Gentile, were fruitful in the production of a variety of opponents, who were not only provided with every artifice of the wisdom of this world, but strengthened with the whole force of temporal power. The teacher of the truth, "as it is in
 " Jesus," was yet well qualified to meet every opponent on his own ground, and there contend for the faith. In endeavouring to convince the Jew, he appealed to the authority of those ancient scriptures, the authenticity of which his antagonist acknowledged. With the Heretic he established the genuine gospels, and exposed the falshood of suppositious ones, contrived for the support of erroneous tenets. With the too superstitious Greek, "wholly given up to idolatry," he successfully contended against the worship of many

gods or dæmons, preaching to him the one true God,
 in whom we live and move and have our being; and
 "whose offspring" the learned Gentile acknowledged
 himself to be. It is true indeed that some mocked, when
 they heard this doctrine preached at Athens; and
 those most probably were guilty of this senseless ridi-
 cule, who were tainted with the impious notions of
 Epicurus, and who thought it of little importance
 whether one or many gods existed, as they denied any
 providential superintendence over creation, or inter-
 ference with human affairs. These indeed are the only
 persons, except the disciples of Pyrrho, the cotempo-
 rary of their master, who did not allow some ground,
 on which the interests of truth might be defended
 against their extravagant errors; but ancient history
 affords us no instance of whole nations betrayed into
 acquiescence with such impieties; it has transmitted
 to us accounts of the banishment of the teachers of
 them from the wisest states, as the destroyers of society,
 and the enemies of order and happiness. It would have
 most likely in those days, been accounted a most inju-
 rious

rious calumny of human nature, if any one had dared to suggest the possibility of such degeneracy and such perversion of judgment, as could induce any number of persons, especially of persons considering themselves as a community, to call in question the very first principles to which human society is indebted for its stability. It would have been esteemed a most absurd supposition, that, after many centuries of successive improvement in arts and sciences, any people, elated with the idea of being more enlightened than their predecessors, should obstinately relapse into that barbarism, both of opinions and conduct, from whence they had been for ages gradually emerging; that, professing a view to the security of social happiness, they should revert to notions, which savage ignorance could alone adopt, and savage rapacity could alone encourage. Such extravagance of error, far beyond the extent of human foresight, surpassing almost every imaginable probability, distinguishes, however, the modern from the ancient opposers of our holy faith. If we compare them together, it is obvious to be remarked, that

the

ancient Jew, who was well convinced that the Mosaic dispensation was of divine origin, but had mistaken the nature of the promises received through Moses and the prophets, had at least some attachment to what he thought the revealed will of God to offer, as an excuse for his unbelief. When he rejected Christ, he did not reject revelation entirely. He questioned neither the existence nor the providence of God. Neither did the ancient heretic so far insult the common sense of mankind, as to presume to deny these fundamental principles. When the Gentile or Greek esteemed "the cross of Christ foolishness," he declared only, that belief in the sufferings of such a person for the sins of man, was irreconcilable with the notions of God adopted by philosophy, after the most humble, patient, and persevering enquiries. But the modern unbeliever, whose doctrines may be known by their fruits in the ruin of France, the modern unbeliever disdains all respect for ancient wisdom; he pays no regard to any opinions, whether of divine or human origin; but, summoning every principle before the usurped tribunal of his

his own ill-informed and prejudiced understanding, and attending to the clamours of his own corrupt passions, or to writers who in these days have been the apologists of the passions, he abjures all submission to the authority of revelation. He abhors the deformity in which his actions are thereby made manifest. "He loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil."

It is therefore by no means wonderful, that he should hate those who profess to walk after that glorious light, and those more especially, whose duty it is to call men to it, and to encourage them to be directed by it in all their steps. Till within a very short time, it was the boast of what is called modern philosophy to be perfectly tolerant. It hypocritically pretended to an unbounded liberality of sentiment towards the professors of every mode of religion, concealing beneath this smiling countenance its inveterate enmity to all; but no sooner had its influence so far prevailed as to bias the conduct of a deluded community, than this

disguise

disguise was of necessity abandoned. It was indeed found too fatally easy, to confound the judgment, to stifle the principles of the uneducated, and to encourage them to give the reins to their very worst passions; but it hath been found impossible to convince the multitude of the convenience or expediency of adopting the same hypocrisy, which veiled the malevolent designs of their deceivers. An expression or two of general benevolence was put into their mouths, and continually contradicted by the enormity of their actions. The false friend of human nature thus promoted his own interests at the expence of the abused people; but at length the most ignorant of them, mad after the recovery of imaginary rights, disdaining to apply to any power for that purpose, except his own personal force, rejecting every determination of the justice of his claims, except that of his own partial opinion, fiercely burst asunder every bond of society, and, in the perpetration of the most terrible excesses, exerted all the violence of unbridled ferocity.

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When

When the ignorant thus think themselves disengaged from social obligations, and exempt from obedience to the commands of religion, having, in the tumult of their frenzy, neither leisure nor disposition to investigate the foundation of their duties to God and man, they consider them as mere impositions, practised on them by such of their superiors in rank and learning as have been too honest to flatter their basest propensities. Unwilling, and till dear-bought experience convinces them, unable to discover, how essential respect for these obligations is to the happiness of mankind, they in the mean time consider those as oppressors, who have, in fact, watched over their peace, and are eager to cast down their real benefactors from the tribunal of justice, and the seat of instruction. Elated with such triumphs over the guardians of their welfare, they rush on to the subversion of all morality, and the violation of all religion; and, raging against Heaven itself with the fury of giants in libertinism, hasten to raise before its face an enormous accumulation of crimes;

With

With men thus hurried on by an epidemical frenzy ; with those, who with unprecedented malignity labor to infect others with the same contagion, it is hopeless to attempt either argument or persuasion. Their conviction must be expected from a higher cause, operating far beyond all human power, in a manner out of the prospect of human foresight, and by progressive degrees appointed in the councils of infinite wisdom. The whole world will then perceive, and perceive with reverential awe, what is the fate of men who “ not having liked to retain God in their knowledge, have by Him been given over to a reprobate mind.” The whole world shall then stand in dread of that power, who alone can say to the madness of the people, as He doth to the raging sea, “ Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall the pride of thy waves be stayed.”

But, in the mean time, there is too much reason to apprehend, that many and various heresies, awaking, as it were, from a long and torpid inactivity, will

continually issue forth, from the chafms of foreign anarchy, to poison the unsuspecting wanderer from the fold. In a divided and distracted state of society, every error is sure to acquire some partizans ; because such a state of society is always the effect of a temporary desertion of many from the truth ; and in proportion as that is abandoned, the success of one error gives encouragement to more. Our own observation fully proves this. What assumes the title of free enquiry in these days, generally consists of an insidious attack upon opinions, which have stood the test of ages, or the presumptuous obtrusion of vain imaginations, springing up, like the sudden productions of a night, from the heat of a tainted understanding. Hence, as the apostle saith, “ too many are carried about with “ every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and “ cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to de- “ ceive.” Even Judaism herself, yet insensible of the vengeance of that innocent blood, which “ hath been” for so many centuries “ on the children” of her long-favoured land,

land, since that conquered province * sat down captive under the trophies of Rome, even Judaism herself, in our days, encourages her obstinate adherents to expect their Messiah will appear, among the ruins of the Christian church, undoubtedly with the same vain hopes of delusion, with which Simon †, the son of Gioras, formerly

* In the year of Rome 824, of our Lord 71, Vespasian, and Titus his son, triumphed together over Judæa. On this occasion many coins were struck with, "JUDÆA CAPTA," or, "JUDÆ DEVICTA," inscribed upon them. Some had a female figure sitting under a trophy, to which this expression alludes.

† Simon, the son of Gioras, was born at Gerasa, formerly Gergesa, in the half tribe of Manasseh, on the eastern Coast of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesareth. In the beginning of the war of the Jews against the Romans, he assembled in the toparchy of Acrabatene, to the westward of Jordan, an army of plunderers, and ravaged the country, till he was expelled from thence by Ananus III. high priest of the Jews, and obliged to retire to Massada, to some other robbers, who had before possession of that fortress. On the death of Ananus, who was murdered in Jerusalem by the Idumæans and Zelots, Simon entered Judæa at the head of 20,000 men, followed by another army of 40,000, and laid waste the whole country with fire and sword. He threatened even Jerusalem itself, into which he was unfortunately admitted, as a defender of it against the Romans. There he was guilty of numberless cruelties, and engaged in continual battles

formerly arose out of the ruins of their own temple.

But let it never be apprehended, though delusions should multiply more and more; though the profligate should endeavour to lull their consciences to rest with the opiates of sophistry, attempting to give peace where there can be no peace; though the restless malignity of abandoned

battles within the city with John of Giscala, the head of another faction, till at length they determined to resist the Romans, then besieging it, as their common enemy. The city, after unparalleled miseries, owing in great measure to his cruelty and inflexible obstinacy, having been at length taken, and the temple burnt, Simon retired with some adherents, workmen, and a quantity of provisions, into a common sewer, from whence he flattered himself he should be able to work a passage and escape; but finding this impracticable, and his provisions failing, he endeavoured to impose upon the Romans by terror. He dressed himself in robes of white and purple, and suddenly arose out of the earth, in the place where the temple had stood. The guards were at first amazed; but at length approached him and demanded who he was. This he refused to acknowledge; but requested them to send for their commander, to whom he confessed the whole truth, and gave himself up. He was carried in chains to Rome, and there executed, after he had been led in triumph by Vespasian and Titus. Vid. Joseph. de bello Judaico.

done men should labour but too effectually in disturbing
 the present comforts, and destroying the future hopes of
 the innocent and unsuspecting, exciting them to vio-
 lence and impiety in this life, and consigning them
 hereafter to *eternal sleep*; though the infinite variety
 of errors should join in one last and desperate effort
 to overthrow Christ's religion, and God's dominion
 over the world; let it not still be apprehended that
 instruments will be wanting to counteract, under His
 gracious protection and providence, the senseless vio-
 lence of His foes. The throne that is established by
 righteousness, and the sceptre which is held in justice
 and mercy, shall still be a refuge for those, who
 "are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Around it
 will assemble the *sincere friends* of *human nature*,
 the faithful servants of God, the firm and merciful
 defenders of the *real* interests of their fellow creatures.
 United in an indissoluble band, "steadfast in faith,
 "rejoicing in hope, and rooted in charity," they
 shall stand even in the evil day, and those, who now,
 as it is become their duty, and the duty of every man,
 declare

declare their attachment to religion and order, and their abhorrence of impiety and anarchy, will adhere to their principles under every trial, and ultimately triumph over every enemy. To such as these the people will look up with confidence, both in church and state. They will gladly revere those as their fathers, who, in the subordinate offices of either, have behaved as their brethren. They will compare their real acts of charity, their unfeigned and active vigilance over the temporal comforts and spiritual welfare of those committed to their charge, with the professions of such as would alienate them from their God, deprive them of their peace, delude them into crimes, and involve them in confusion. Against the insidious pretences of such enemies of Christianity, they will weigh the examples of its sincere defenders and faithful teachers, and they will be experimentally convinced of the necessity, the benefits, and the excellence of that order, which Christ hath established in his church, with whom he hath declared that “ He is always even unto the end “ of the world.”

On this truth therefore we may surely rely ; on His all powerful assistance we may depend, in every contest, to which we may be called, even in these days of unprincipled innovations. His spirit will protect every humble and faithful believer, that no man should “ spoil him through philosophy and vain deceit.” His spirit will support those who “ take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, they also shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away.”

F I N I S.

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Published by the same AUTHOR,

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